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June 2023 Newsletter



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Our Mission

OCLA leverages technology to empower youth, adults, and families experiencing homelessness or resource-insecurity to find essential services. Our mobile and online tools break information barriers to offer our most vulnerable community members access to the help they need to make positive changes in their lives.

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Do you believe that everyone should know how to find supportive services when they are without a place to call their own to sleep, are hungry or lacking access to other essential services? If YES.... I invite you to join us in breaking information barriers and support our efforts to educate all of LA's impoverished or vulnerable communities about WIN.

This year we are so busy- tackling not only homelessness but adding new ways to use WIN to address the homelessness pipeline. We are currently developing a new interactive survey which will enable users to learn if they qualify for HUD housing, We are also adding the ability to search for help by zip code and so much more! Meanwhile, our staff is offering education about WIN in communities all around the county as well as providing training and support our nonprofit partners (see list below) who are working with us to raise awareness about WIN in the communities they serve.

Please support our efforts to empower those in need to more rapidly connect to essential services and **support OCLA** today! (*and Stay Tuned for information for our Fall Fundraiser!*)

with appreciation,

Dr Denise McCain-Tharnstrom

Founder/President OCLA

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WIN- Community Comments

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"The app is genius, I actually wanted to create a link for our clients to be able to find resources but this is better." Feb 2023: Lisa A., Project imPACT Paralegal. Neighborhood Legal Services of LA in San Fernando Valley

"Oh, I know the WIN app! I love it!" Chris demonstrated the app downloaded on his phone and said "it is a helpful tool" that he uses when working with his clients. Mar 2023: Chris F., FSAC case manager, Family Support & Advocacy Center (FSAC) in Monterey Park

"We have WIN postcards in all classrooms and teachers regularly give to students as needed. One student returned to her teacher and excitedly told her "WIN really works! I found help". May 2023: Olga and Lorena, SM/Malibu School District- Adult Education Center Staff

Connecting LGBTQ+ and Homelessness

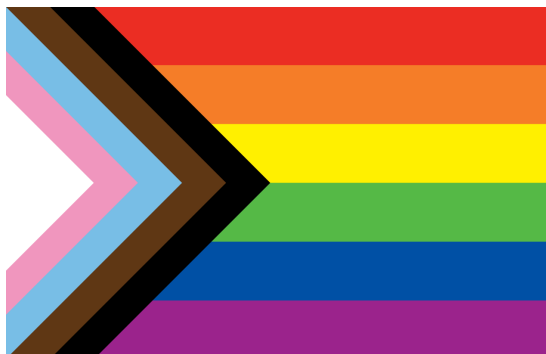
As we celebrate Pride Month and the many contributions of our LGBTQ friends and family to our society, at OCLA we cannot forget the connections between homelessness and simply "being" gay.

- *Did you know that those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ+) have a 120% higher risk of experiencing some form of homelessness?
- LGBTQ young adults are also more likely to experience assault, trauma, depression, self-harm, and suicide when compared to non-LGBTQ+ populations while also being homeless.
- Many homeless LGBTQ youth too often flee shelters that are not LGBTQ+ due to what might happen to them if their sexual preference was discovered.
- (Data from the [National Network for Youth](#))

The WIN What I Need app supports LGBTQ youth and adults by enabling them to search for providers who have programs that serve them. How?

- Users can either adjust their profile to include LGBTQ OR in any given search, users can select LGBTQ under the Community filter. Currently this will result in a list of programs that will serve the LGBTQ community.

adults.-- Many service organizations offer safe spaces, mentorship, mental health services, education paths, work support, housing and shelter and other services offered by empathetic trained professionals *OCLA is excited WIN will soon be able to provide another way to connect homeless or struggling LGBTQ individuals to supportive services they can access without fear.*



For OCLA, Pride Month is about learning, valuing and supporting the LGBTQ community... **Happy Pride Month!**

Team WIN Spotlight



Team WIN has launched a new Cooking video series "**Cooking with Pearl!**"

Team WIN member, Perla E., who recently graduated from LA's Southwest Community College with her AA, will be starting this fall at Cal State Long Beach to study to be a dietician! In this series, she is scripting, narrating and

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from low cost ingredients, most of which can be obtained from a local food pantry. Watch the inaugural video in the series on OCLA's YouTube channel [here!](#)

SIGN UP FOR WIN ALERTS



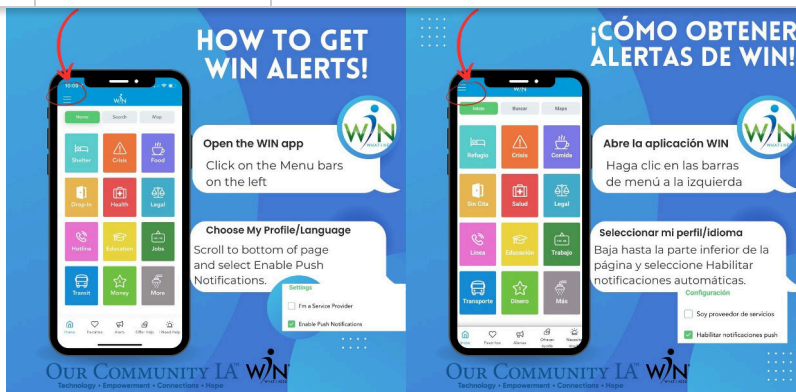
Summer is already upon us and with it many opportunities to obtain food, and attend helpful (and fun) community resource fairs. If you enable notifications, OCLA sends Alerts about these programs right to your phone via the WIN app . Recently we published How To Get WIN Alerts on our Social Media! These announcements were sent in both English and Spanish! For those of you who missed them, we have dropped our social media post with instructions below!

1. Click on the menu bar (3 lines in the upper right-hand corner)
2. Click on Choose My Profile/Language.
3. Scroll to the bottom to see a box you can select to Enable Notifications from

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Learn how to Download WIN Now!

OCLA In the Community

OCLA and Team WIN have been busy in the community!



The OCLA team members have been actively spreading the word and educating community members this Spring!

Kevin Mendez has been hard at work attending various events in South LA and knocking on doors to tell residents about WIN. Genesis Torres has represented OCLA at homeless coalitions meeting around the county, and hosted tables to educate those experiencing homelessness at Homeless Connect Day in Spa 2

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Homeless Connect Days as well as offered presentations for various nonprofit partners introducing them to WIN. Dr. McCain has presented about WIN to various groups, hosted a table at the probation event in Santa Monica and she and the entire team joined together to help out with a food distribution event at New Story Church in May. New team member, Joranne Joseph joined Dr McCain and Team WIN in hosting a table at the Compton Community Resource Fair.

It has been a pleasure to be more active in the community and share the word of WIN to all our neighbors in Los Angeles County!

Thank you to our Partners!

We get super excited when we get to share the word of WIN to new organizations. We are always actively working on developing partnerships while supporting our existing partners! Below are some of our partners who are educating those they serve about WIN!

City of Bell, Ave 33 Farm, Hollywood Partnership, Valencia School District, LA County Fire Department East Regional Operation/Covina, Antelope Valley Home Visitation Coalition, South LA LAPD Clergy, Crenshaw School District, City of Cudahy, LA Care & Blue Shield Promise Resource Center Long Beach, Neighborhood Legal Services of LA, Chysalis- Pacoima, Office of Hilda Solis, Antelope Valley Partners in Health, City of Palmdale, Chysalis- Santa Monica, Culver City Backback Program, LA County Probation Department SPA 5, and the Santa Monica/Malibu School District- Adult Education Centers.

We thank our Partner Agencies and Cities who are working alongside us to share information about WIN to the residents of LA County who are experiencing resource insecurity or homelessness!.

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Saying Good Bye by Jen Ortiz!

Jennifer Ortiz has been a valued member of the OCLA team since August 2012. During her time with us, Jen regularly updated our program database while also serving as a valued member of our outreach team. Jen's calling as an instructor and support counselor for those who are system involved was placed on hold during COVID and we benefited from her experience. All of us at OCLA wish her well as she returns to the field she loves! And we are excited that she plans to remain connected to OCLA and hopes to offer her time to continue to help us raise awareness about WIN in the community!



Jen's Farewell: My time with OCLA has been a blessing and massively purposeful! Working with the OCLA staff and supporting the community engagement of the WIN App has afforded me the greatest opportunity to be of service to my community while empowering others to get connected to needed resources for sustainability. Even more amazingly, I've had the opportunity to share this gem [the WIN App] with my Spanish-speaking community members, engage law enforcement and first responders in promoting the app, collaborate with other nonprofits, and connect with elected officials who believe in the power of technology for good!

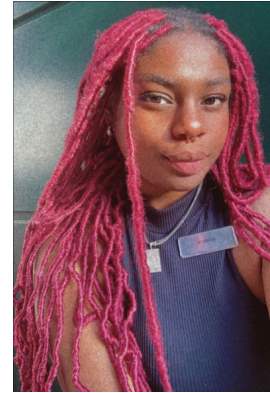
While my time with OCLA has been very rewarding, my departure is bittersweet. I step away from my duties as WIN Engagement Coordinator to return to the world of teaching and advocacy in our LA County jails. I was recently hired as adjunct faculty by College of the Canyons for the Rising Scholars Program as an instructor for the adult students eager to learn and create new pathways to higher education at Century Regional Detention Center in Lynwood and Pitchess Detention Center in Castaic. It is truly the work I feel most called to do and it aligns with my educational background within Forensic Psychology. And while I may no longer be an everyday member of the OCLA team, I am a continued supporter of the WIN App, the incredible barriers it transcends, and an advocate for self sufficiency and dignity that the WIN App promotes for all Angelenos.

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My time with OCLA has reflected just that and I'm grateful that Denise took a chance on me. It's been an honor and a pleasure to serve, and I look forward to celebrating all the OCLAWIN successes to come!

WELCOME Joranne Joseph OCLA's NEW Campus Outreach Coordinator

Joranne joined OCLA in late April with the support of the YYA grant and will be leading OCLA's HUD Housing Survey and WIN Outreach pilot on 4 community college campuses. Campus Peer Navigators have reported that local College Students are too often turned away from HUD housing even when they are eligible. The goal of the Housing Survey is to help students learn if they qualify for HUD Housing and empower them to advocate for themselves. Joranne is currently working with students to develop the survey language and is also beginning to develop a campaign to raise awareness about the Survey once it has launched!



Joranne says "Something I'm excited to learn about with OCLA is how exactly to meet the most immediate needs of those who are at risk, strategically, effectively and most of all resourcefully, which I have begun to see OCLA carry out amazingly. I appreciate what I see and learn through OCLA, as I myself am currently in school for Social Work and have hopes of having or working with Organizations with very similar goals. OCLA has been phenomenal in laying the groundwork and setting the perfect example of how one can go about doing so."

To learn more about OCLA's HUD Housing Survey and Community College Outreach- Contact Joranne at college@oclawin.org

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OCLA'S FACT FRIDAY

 **PRIDE MONTH**


Research has shown that those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ+) have a 120% higher risk of experiencing some form of homelessness.

OCLA'S FACT FRIDAY

 **PRIDE MONTH**

Youth who are Black or multiracial and LGBTQ+ are reported the highest rates of homelessness



Follow us on Social Media!

We use Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to share helpful resources with our community! Every Friday we share a fact about homelessness and resource insecurity. Our goal is to continue to advocate and raise awareness for these issues. Our topic this month in honor of Pride Month is around homelessness and LGBTQIA+.

Find us on Twitter @oclawin, Instagram @ourcommunityla, TikTok @winwhatineed, and Facebook @ourcommunityla.



Donate to OCLA and WIN

We welcome all contributions to support our services!

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